

FIRE PLAYED HAVOC.

Unfortunate Results of a King George Hunt.

A GYPSY GANG'S HARVEST.

The Northern Neck Railroad—Reactor.

Called—A Sign of a Hard Winter.

Corn-Shucking—Retires from Practice—Personal.

(Correspondence of the Dispatch.)

CORNISH, KING GEORGE COUNTY, VA., November 2.—Fire played havoc with fences, timber, wood, etc., in the immediate vicinity of Port Conway, this county, the early part of this week. Some hunters chased a rabbit into a hollow tree, and in order to force their game from its hiding place set fire to the tree, and in a few minutes the flames became uncontrollable and spread rapidly over the adjacent fields and forest, destroying everything in their path. Everything was as dry as powder and the wind was blowing at a fearful rate, so that all efforts to avert a widespread conflagration were fruitless. Mr. Henry V. Turner, one of the wealthiest and most prominent citizens in the neighborhood, suffered the loss of considerable fencing, provender, etc., on his "Wood-lawn" farm, where the terrible fire originated. The gentleman who brought the news of the fire to this place stated that it was impossible to estimate the amount of damages to timber and farm property.

A gang of about twenty-five gypsies arrived in this county last week and pitched their tents on the grounds around old Lamb's-Creek church. Their "fortune-tellers," bears, dogs, banjo-players, and baby dancers draw large crowds to the camp daily, and not a few poor men have already invested their "last dollar" with the "wretched fortune-tellers." Young sporting characters have had the future "unfolded and foretold" in thrilling and felicitous phraseology—the modern fakir's stock-in-trade with which to deplete the average country boy's pocket.

Mr. John T. Minor, of this place, the leading merchant of the county, went to Baltimore this week to purchase his winter stock of merchandise. His wife accompanied him as far as Washington, where she will spend some days with relatives.

RAILROAD MATTERS.

It is reported here that the contract for constructing the Northern Neck railroad was let this week, and that the work of construction will begin as soon as some little differences between the company and several citizens of Stafford can be satisfactorily settled.

Mr. W. McDonald Lee, editor of the Virginia Citizen, and one of the Northern Neck's very useful citizens, attended the Atlanta Exposition.

Misses Susie and Mattie Baker, of Shiloh, this county, are visiting friends in Alexandria.

The many public political speeches made in the Northern Neck since the campaign opened have had a very good effect, but all the public speaking combined has not accomplished as much good for the Democratic party as has been accomplished by the unceasing work of the Northern Neck News, published at Warsaw, in Richmond county, and the Virginia Citizen, published at Irvington, in Lancaster county. These two lively Democratic weeklies deserve the thanks of the Democracy for the powerful influence they have wielded during the campaign. They have proved a potent factor in the affairs of the Neck.

Mr. Clark Merrill, of Bloomsburg, Pa., arrived in King George last Tuesday to see after his interest in the estate of his brother, the late William Merrill.

Rev. Thomas P. Baker, a native of this county, and whose parents reside here, has been called to the rectorship of St. John's Episcopal church, in Florence, S. C. He was assistant rector of St. Michael's church, of Charleston, S. C., at the time of the death of Dr. Grinke, the rector, last spring, and has retained that position since.

WILD GEESE.

Large flocks of wild geese have been travelling southward this week, many of them finding winter quarters in the northern part of the continent, while many of our old citizens, this very early movement of wild geese is regarded as a "sure sign" of an early and hard winter. Anyhow, their appearance here has hastened corn-shucking and the procuring of winter wood.

Dr. William N. Jett, of Port Conway, the oldest physician in King George, has made known his intention of retiring from the active practice of medicine, and of locating on his magnificent "Smith Mountain" farm in Westmoreland, Va. While the people of that section will be Jett much happiness, sweet rest, and abundant prosperity, they are loath to give him up, and regret exceedingly that he has determined to leave King George. Dr. Jett is an ideal old Virginia gentleman, and a valuable man.

Mr. Wesley Butler, of Washington, D. C., who has been visiting in Fluvanna and Louisa counties, arrived here on Monday night last, having made the trip from the capital in a bicycle that day. A portion of the roads over which he travelled was very rough, yet he averaged ten miles an hour a good part of that long trip.

Judge Charles H. Ashton and the members of the Electoral Board of this county met at the court-house yesterday, and arranged the ballots for next Tuesday's election. Mr. J. T. Minor, Jr., secretary of the board, took charge of the stamped and sealed ballots for the purpose of distributing them among the voting-polling places.

Mrs. Alice Barksdale, of Washington, D. C., visited her parents, Judge and Mrs. C. H. Ashton, near Aldie, this county, last week.

The steam-grist-mill of Mr. E. B. Whitehouse proved a Godsend to the people in the upper portion of the county during the present distressing drought, for nearly every water-power mill in the county had to suspend, partially, operations some time ago on account of the almost unprecedented scarcity of water. The extraordinary capacity of Mr. E. B. Grymes' mill has enabled that gentleman's grist-mill to accommodate its custom a greater part of the time, while others have been standing still.

FARMERS ACTIVE.

This week has been one of unusual activity among most of our farmers. It being impossible to plow and to seed small grain in many sections, the farmers turned their attention and energies to shucking and housing corn, and consequently a greater part of the crop is in the crib. This branch of farm-work will be completed here this season at least a month earlier than usual. Although the statement in this correspondence nearly two months ago that the corn yield would be 40 per cent. below the average was criticized as an "underestimate" of the yield, it is now conceded that the crop is "short more than 50 per cent." throughout the county. In some highland sections, where the crop has been gathered and housed, the yield is 75 per cent. below the average.

The skilled painters from Mentreux have completed their work on Hon. John E. Mason's residence, near this place. Mr. E. Mason's residence is now one of the most beautiful in King George county, and situated on the heights overlooking the Rappahannock Valley for many miles up and down the river, it is greatly admired by all passers-by.

Mr. Howard S. Cift, a popular carpenter here, left last Monday for a point near Baltimore, Md., where he has a contract for work in his line. This young man's faithful workmanship and strict

integrity have won for him an excellent reputation and large patronage as a house-builder and repairer.

Human hearts could scarcely be more profoundly grateful for anything than were ours for the gentle showers which began to fall upon the parched thirsty fields here on Thursday evening of this week—the first rain of any consequence in the direction since the early part of last July.

It is rumored here that the steamer Mattano, one of the most widely-known and largely-patronized freight- and passenger-boats on the Potomac river, suspended its regular trips this week, and will be hauled for thorough repairs in time for the early spring traffic.

Mr. James Griffin, an enterprising farmer and fisherman of the county, has erected a handsome and commodious two-story dwelling near Matthias Point, on the Potomac. Painters are now at work beautifying the exterior of the building.

WYTHEVILLE'S BUDGET.

The Welcome Rain—Game—Social and Personal.

WYTHEVILLE, VA., November 2.—The drought has at last been broken by a good rain, beginning on Thursday, and though it is too late to revive the fall pastures, it will be of great benefit to the wheat, and will fill up the cisterns and renew the springs.

Crystal spring, four miles distant, on the mountain side, from which Wytheville draws her supply of delicious free-stone drinking water, has been low for several weeks, and the authorities have been obliged to keep the reservoir filled by pumping into it water from a limestone spring in the town.

PARTRIDGES.

The law is still in force forbidding sportsmen to shoot partridges in this county. The law was enacted with the hope that if let alone for several years the birds would multiply rapidly and repair the serious inroads made into their numbers by the severe winter of three years ago. Unfortunately last winter was still more severe, and so the poor "Bob Whites" have not had much chance.

Eight years ago large flocks of them infested fields and groves so that our sportsmen sometimes bagged fifty and seventy-five in a day, and the shooting was glutted. On the occasion of a reception in the town one gentleman contracted for two partridges, which were promptly delivered, having been shot, it was said, by one man.

A plump quail brooded over a bed of hot coals, dressed with drawn butter, and a little paper and salt, and served on a tiny piece of crisp, hot toast, is one of the dishes which the epicure prizes most highly.

TURKEYS AND PHEASANTS.

Wild turkeys and pheasants have appeared on the market, and it is said that pheasants are numerous.

Mrs. McKee Barclay, who spent the summer with her son-in-law, Rev. T. M. Barclay, returned to her home, in Limestone, Wednesday.

Mrs. Phelps, who has been ill with intermitting fever, is recovering slowly.

CURRENT-EVENTS CLUB.

The Current-Events Club will be reorganized soon, with probably some modification of the original plan. Mrs. John Brown will entertain the ladies of the club at their first meeting.

Miss Gertrude Van Lear, of Staunton, Va., made a brief visit to Mrs. James A. Waller this week. She will teach in Mr. Robert Gleaves' family, on Cripple Creek, during this session.

Mrs. Lee Allison has returned to her home, in the east end of the county, after a visit to Mrs. E. McG. Phelps.

The last of our southern visitors, a party of four ladies, who have been guests of Mrs. David Rich, left for their homes this week.

Mr. T. P. Whipple, a well-known business-man of Wytheville, has been very ill at his home, on Main street, but is improving at this time.

The Capture of General Edward Johnson.

FARMVILLE, VA., October 26, 1895. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Apropos of war incidents. Mr. E. H. Davis, of the 103rd Virginia Regiment, tells an interesting one of the capture of General Edward Johnson at the famous horse-shoe locality in the great battle near Spotsylvania Courthouse on May 12, 1864.

After the capture of this general and a part of his division, and when the prisoners were being taken to the rear under guard, the First Regiment of Virginia Artillery, which by the way, emblazoned two companies of Richmond Howitzers continued to fire upon the enemy as they passed. The Confederate prisoners were held up in the rear. After going a short distance one of the guard was blown to atoms by a Confederate shell. A few moments after this a well-directed cannon-ball completely dismounted a Federal piece of artillery, cutting it down as if by an axe. The battery being still further disabled, was ordered to leave the field, the officer in charge remarking as he gave the order to leave that it was impossible to withstand such a well-directed fire; that "the rebels" had perfect range of his position.

At the cutting down of the gun the entire crew, except the driver, prisoners under guard could not be restrained by their captors. A mighty "rebel yell" was given that reverberated above the roar of battle, as shot and shell passed over the heads of the prisoners. That grim old general, Edward Johnson, observed the prisoners ducking their heads and dodging. Although mortified almost beyond expression at being a prisoner himself, he ordered the prisoners not to dodge, remarking that those bairds were "hunting Yankees and not Johnnies."

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